



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot *Niagara Falls, NY*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

OVERVIEW

EPA has selected the City of Niagara Falls as a Brownfields Pilot. Between 1960 and 1990, the city's population declined substantially, and the manufacturing worker population dropped by one-third. Industries have left the area, leaving idle sites that are a major problem for Niagara Falls. Seventeen of these former industrial sites, encompassing 386 acres, are suspected of containing contaminated soil or groundwater and are unmarketable as a result of the environmental stigma. No tracts of undeveloped, uncontaminated land remain for development within the city; therefore, brownfields cleanup is imperative for economic growth. To promote successful redevelopment of the properties, the environmental risks must be defined accurately to encourage interest by banks and developers.

Of the 17 contaminated sites, four have been targeted for the pilot. Because the four sites are within the state-designated Economic Development Zone, the city will be able to offer tax credits and utility rate reductions to new or expanding businesses. Redevelopment of these sites will provide an opportunity for Niagara Falls to revitalize economically disadvantaged areas, provide jobs, augment the city's dwindling tax base, and limit urban sprawl and infrastructure maintenance costs.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Niagara Falls, New York

Date of Award:
April 1997

Amount: \$195,250

Site Profile: Four sites within the City's industrial area are targeted for the pilot.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

OBJECTIVES

The city's goal is to provide guidance in redeveloping under-used and potentially contaminated properties. The city will use a systematic approach toward redevelopment that includes outreach, risk assessment, and environmental education. For each of the four sites targeted in the pilot, the city will develop cost estimates for rehabilitation, demolition, and remediation and will identify potential financing sources. Experience gained from the pilot will be used to address additional sites with contamination concerns and redevelopment potential.

ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this pilot include:

- Conducting detailed investigations of four targeted sites to determine the extent of contamination;
- Planning for the cleanup of each of the four targeted sites, and developing cost estimates;
- Creating a comprehensive education and outreach program that addresses the needs of the Economic Development Zone neighborhoods;
- Establishing an Environmental Awareness Center to develop, coordinate, implement, and document environmental education programs; and
- Coordinating pilot activities with ongoing brown-fields efforts conducted by the city's Department of Environmental Services.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.